

# LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

## WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**24 February 2004**

REPORT NO : /2004 FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

FOR INFORMATION

NAME OF WARD:  
Welsh Harp, Dollis Hill, All

### **WELSH HARP RESERVOIR MANAGEMENT PLAN**

#### **1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1.1 This report presents progress on the Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan and related issues. The Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan is a joint Management Plan between the three main land-holding and land-managing organisations in the vicinity: Brent Council, British Waterways, and the London Borough of Barnet.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report and that officers will be completing the remaining stages of the Local Nature Reserve designation.

#### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 None specific, but some of the priorities identified in the Management Plan will require additional resources 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 Operational Plan. Thus implementation is partially dependent upon revenue and capital budgets for grounds maintenance and for parks management. The Parks Service actively pursues other sources of finance and opportunities for partnership working that may become available.
- 3.2 Local Nature Reserve: There will be a modest cost associated with the preparation of the Designation, and the publication of the Public Notices. That expenditure has been programmed by the Parks Service for early in the 2004/05 financial year. Once the Local Nature Reserve has been designated, it is not expected that the Local Nature Reserve will require any additional finance over and above the current financial arrangements. However, the designation may provide opportunities for grant applications.

## **4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None specific.

## **5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Welsh Harp Management Plan co-ordinates current environmental works in the Reservoir area, and highlights works that are a future priority.

5.2 The designation of the Local Nature Reserve will help to protect the wildlife of the Reservoir area and the interpretation of the biodiversity interest.

## **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) and other legislation has implications for the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the role of the Welsh Harp Management Plan. Under the Act (and previous legislation), the land owners / managers are required to obtain consent from English Nature before undertaking management or other works on the Site of Special Scientific Interest. CROW increases the responsibility on the land owners to improve the management of SSSIs. The Act also encourages land owners to produce management plans for the SSSI, which when approved by English Nature, enable the carrying out of the management works specified in the Management Plan. This can reduce the administrative problems inherent in having to obtain consent for each individual item of management work.

6.2 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949: This Act enabled the designation of the proposed Local Nature Reserve at the Reservoir.

## **6.3 DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

None specific.

## **7.0 DETAIL**

### **Welsh Harp Management Plan**

7.1 The Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan is kept under review by officers of the land owning and land managing organisations. An annual review is undertaken in approximately July each year, and then reported to Committee for the Committee's recommendations. Since 2001, when the CROW Act came into force, officers have included in the Management Plan process the additional responsibilities detailed in the CROW Act.

- 7.2 The current version (10 November 2003) of the Management Plan is that signed by English Nature on 15 May 2003 and as amended by the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee on 9 December 2003. Both the original and the amended versions of the Management Plan are currently available on the internet at [www.Brent.gov.uk/parks](http://www.Brent.gov.uk/parks) (from there go to the 'Brent Biodiversity Action Plan homepage and then navigate to the Brent Reservoir Action Plan). English Nature have indicated that for minor changes to the Management Plan, there is no need to seek their formal consent, though an electronic copy of the amended version has been deposited with English Nature.
- 7.3 Management of the marshland: Management of tree growth in the marshland (zone 6D/Brent) on the northern edge of the Reservoir at the Welsh Harp Open Space will be undertaken by Brent Council Parks Service and the Welsh Harp Sailing Association in the February 2004.
- 7.4 British Waterways will be updating the Committee on the proposed works that they are undertaking to the dam wall and its vicinity. As part of this project, British Waterways are holding discussions with Brent Council with respect to a terrestrial bund within Neasden Recreation Ground (zones 7E and 7A).
- 7.5 Heritage Lottery Award: Maintenance of the projects is on-going.
- 7.6 Fly-tipping and pollution: The Environment Agency is leading an investigation of fly-tipping and pollution incidents on the south-east shore of the Brent Reservoir. Officers from Brent Council, British Waterways, and English Nature are also involved.

### **Neasden Pavilion**

- 7.7 Brent Council Parks Service is considering finding a new use for the derelict pavilion building in Neasden Recreation Ground. As previously reported to this committee, any use will need to be compatible with the function of Neasden Recreation Ground as a public open space; and with the Council's Unitary Development Plan. The Parks Service is continuing to negotiate with an applicant, and the Council is waiting for the applicant to provide a business plan with relevant information, before the proposal can be considered further. The expected timetable for the submission of the business plan is now the summer of 2004.

### **Local Nature Reserve**

- 7.8 Local Authorities have the authority to designate Local Nature Reserves over land that they own on in which they have an interest.
- 7.9 Purposes of designation: A Local Nature Reserve is defined as land managed for the purpose of providing opportunities for the study of biodiversity (including geological and physiographical features), and / or for preserving these features. LNRs can have important local functions for environmental education and interpretation.

- 7.10 The proposed local Nature Reserve (LNR) at the Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir would need to be jointly designated by the London Borough of Barnet and by Brent Council. A high proportion of the land however is in the ownership of British Waterways. The Management Plan and an exchange of letters between the local authorities and British Waterways has enabled the interest of the two local authorities to designate the Local Nature Reserve in partnership with British Waterways. In their letter of 28 January 1998, British Waterways stated that they were supportive of the proposed designation. British Waterways offered their support on the basis that the designation would not prejudice the operational function of the Reservoir.
- 7.11 The London Borough of Barnet and Brent Council have formally consulted with English Nature under Section 21 (6) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. English Nature have confirmed this in their letter to Brent Council (and to the London Borough of Barnet) of 19 December 2000. English Nature are also a Member of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee and have been kept informed of progress.
- 7.12 The Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan agreed between British Waterways, Brent Council and the London Borough of Barnet, which has received the consent of English Nature, will act as the Management Plan for the Local Nature Reserve.
- 7.13 Brent Council has stated its intention to designate a LNR at the Brent Reservoir in its Unitary Development Plan which was adopted in January 2004. The LNR proposal was also in Brent's 1996 Unitary Development Plan.
- 7.14 The Brent Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map shows the boundary of the proposed LNR. The designation of the Local Nature Reserve in Brent will follow the boundary as on the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map, unless final checks reveal any reason to deviate from that boundary.
- 7.15 The London Borough of Barnet are awaiting the adoption of its Unitary Development Plan. Although the proposal to designate the LNR has previously been considered by some Barnet committees, Barnet officers will check that the Council has approved the designation or will seek approval from the relevant Barnet Council committee.
- 7.16 The London Borough of Barnet reported to the previous meeting (9 December 2003) of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee on the proposed boundaries of the LNR within the London Borough of Barnet. This report explained the reasons for the inclusion in or exclusions of several parcels of land of the proposed LNR.

### **Biodiversity Action Plan**

- 7.12 Current information on the Biodiversity Action Plans relating to the Brent Reservoir and Welsh Harp area can be accessed via the Brent Council Parks website at [www.Brent.gov.uk/parks](http://www.Brent.gov.uk/parks) or via [www.Brent.gov.uk](http://www.Brent.gov.uk)

- 7.17 Urban Green Spaces Strategy: Brent Council Parks Service are continuing to produce an Urban Green Spaces Strategy for the Borough which will consider the whole spectrum of green spaces functions and issues. The Strategy will include the Brent Reservoir and the Welsh Harp area.

### **Kingsbury and Welsh Harp Reservoir Open Day**

- 7.18 In 2004 the event is due to take place on the Spring Bank Holiday 31 May. Discussions are being held with the volunteer teams organising the event.
- 7.19 The event is primarily organised and managed by volunteers of the community groups involved. There is some minor administrative and other support provided by Brent Council Parks Service as part of its role in managing the Welsh Harp Open Space and working with the community. The organisers of the event are planning to meet soon, but have asked if the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee members could give some indication of the likely level of interest from their organisations for this year's event.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Details of Documents:**

- 8.1 Local Nature Reserves in England. A Guide to their Selection and Declaration. English Nature. 1999.
- 8.2 Dated correspondence and other documents referred to in the Report.
- 8.3 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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