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Meeting	Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee (WHJCC)
Date	14 April 2005
Subject	Welsh Harp Management
Report of	Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport
Summary	Position on the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) declaration, site management, Heritage Lottery Fund project and Woodfield Pavilion

Officer Contributors	Head of Environmental Services
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	West Hendon
Enclosures	Draft byelaws to be circulated separately
For decision by	Joint Committee
Function of	Executive
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in (if appropriate)	N/A

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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Joint Committee note the position relating to the LNR designation and ask Barnet's Officers to report on progress to the next meeting.
- 1.2 That the Joint Committee agree the proposed byelaws and refer them to the Hendon Area Environmental Sub Committee for approval. with the request that that Committee recommend the Council to approve them.
- 1.3 That the Joint Committee agree to the proposed closure of the car park on Cool Oak Lane to the general public.
- 1.4 That the situation relating to other site management issues be noted.

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 9 March 1998, Recreation, Leisure and Arts Committee, resolved to recommend to Council that LNRs be declared at the Welsh Harp, Big Wood and Totteridge Fields Nature Reserves. However, the Chief Executive's supplementary report to Council on 21 April 1998 stated amongst others that the Council should not approve the draft byelaws for the Welsh Harp LNR, and that they must be amended as necessary and resubmitted to Committee.
- 2.2 Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee on 9 December 2003 - approved the proposed boundary of the LNR.
- 2.3 Hendon Area Environmental Sub-Committee on 15 March 2005 agreed the designation of a Local Nature Reserve on the Welsh Harp.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The ongoing management of the Welsh Harp contributes towards a Cleaner, Greener Borough.
- 3.2 The work also helps deliver the Corporate Plan priority: 'Improving usage and standards of greenspaces'.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 Continuing the status quo at the Car Park leaves the council open to further costs associated with clearing up following fly-tipping and other anti-social behaviour.

5. FINANCIAL, STAFFING, ICT AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There will be a small cost related to closing the car park and issuing keys, this will be outweighed by the savings made in reduced vandalism.

6. LEGAL ISSUES

- 6.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty under 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 Park and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to acquire, declare and manage nature reserves. The 1949 Act states that a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) must be managed in such a way that uses to which people put the site to do not damage the natural features.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 7.1 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.

8. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

8.1 Local Nature Reserve and Bye-laws

Declaration of a Welsh Harp Local Nature Reserve was agreed by the Hendon Area Environmental Sub-Committee on 15 March 2005. The instruments of declaration have now been drawn up and are awaiting signature.

The draft byelaws drawn up in 1998 gave rise to issues which were not resolved at the time. These issues have now been addressed and will be circulated prior to the meeting.

Once these byelaws and the changes have been approved by the JCC they can be referred to the relevant body for consultation as required.

The byelaws can then be referred to the Hendon Area Environmental Sub-Committee for referral to the Council in order that application may be made to the Minister for the Environment to sanction them.

8.2 SES Patrols and enforcement

The Street Enforcement Service (SES) have considered daily patrols of the Welsh Harp between 2pm and 10pm, this has been discounted on resource grounds, as one officer patrolling would cost in the region of £100,000 per annum. It would not be practical on safety grounds to have one officer working alone in the area during the hours requested. The borough police commander Chief Superintendent Mark Ricketts has agreed to one officer accompanying a Street Enforcement Officer. These joint patrols will take place on Saturday and Sunday from 1pm to 6pm between May and September. At other times SES will continue to carry out occasional patrols.

8.3 Water Quality

The Environment Agency has supplied water quality data from three sampling points for the period 2001-2003. This has been graded according the General Quality Assessment (GQA) scheme, the national method for classifying water quality in rivers and canals. There are four separate criteria: chemistry, biology, nutrients and aesthetics

- River Brent, Neasden Lane was graded C 'fairly good' water quality
- River Brent, Priestley Way: E 'poor' water quality
- Silk Stream, Silk Bridge: D 'fair' water quality

8.4 **Cool Oak Lane car park**

This car park is isolated and suffers from anti-social behaviour. In particular fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles. Closing this car park to the general public will not cause too much disruption as there is parking available at Woodfield Park and in nearby residential roads. Keys could be made available to those legitimate users such as football teams and the Welsh Harp Conservation Group.

Last year the council spent £2,200 on securing and repairing gates and bollards. 60 tonnes of soil were fly-tipped last summer.

Six abandoned cars have been removed since August 2003, at a cost of £70 each time.

8.5 **Cool Oak Lane bridge**

Following an enquiry regarding the capacity of the bridge, the Head of Highways and Design has reported: The weight carrying capacity of Cool Oak Lane bridge is 30T although it is signed as 7.5T except for access. This bridge is in need of extensive repairs to prevent further deterioration. The parapets needs to be re-built to cater for potential side impacts to prevent vehicles bursting through. As this bridge is a listed structure no approval to carry out any works has been given.

9. **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 Report to Hendon Area Sub-Committee 15 March 2005

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

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