



Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

Wednesday, 7th December 2005

Report from the Director of Environment and Culture

For Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

Report Title: Welsh Harp Management Plan

Forward Plan Ref:

1.0 Summary

- 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 the derelict pavilion at Neasden Recreation Ground has been demolished.

3.0 Detail

Welsh Harp Management Plan

- 3.1 The Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan is administered 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, officers have included in the Management Plan process the additional responsibilities of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to produce Management Plans for SSSIs.

- 3.2 The Management Plan was signed by English Nature on 15 May 2003. Subsequent amendments have been reported to this Committee. English Nature have indicated that for minor changes to the Management Plan, there is no need to seek their formal consent.
- 3.3 The current version of the Management Plan has been placed on the internet via Brent Council's website at www.Brent.gov.uk/parks (from there go to the 'Brent Biodiversity Action Plan homepage and then navigate via the Brent Reservoir Action Plan). A map of the zones is also provided on the internet; and a copy of the map is also attached to this report.
- 3.4 Only minor, technical and date changes are proposed to the Management Plan during the 2005 review, though officers have met with English Nature to discuss the implications of the West Hendon Regeneration proposals. The changes reflect in particular the completion of the Heritage Lottery Award works, the works by British Waterways to improve the dam wall and to extend the dam as a bund into Neasden Recreation Ground, the West Hendon Regeneration project, the closure of the Welsh Harp Youth Sailing base, changes at the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre, the demolition of Neasden Pavilion; and the Declaration of the Local Nature Reserve. A draft has been prepared by officers though some further information is required before completion.
- 3.5. Cross-boundary working by enforcement officers: Officers of Barnet, British Waterways and Brent have continued to cooperate as far as practicable.
- 3.6 Dam wall works. Brent Council Parks Service continues to work with British Waterways as part of their works to the dam wall. The construction of the bund, a mounded extension to the dam wall, at Neasden Recreation Ground is substantially complete.

Heritage Lottery Award

- 3.7 The creation of the scrape near to the edge of the Reservoir at the Welsh Harp Open Space was completed in early November 2005. Aftercare works will continue as appropriate for all of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Details of the projects have been reported to previous meetings of the WHJCC.

Neasden Pavilion

- 3.8 The derelict pavilion at Neasden Recreation Ground was demolished in November 2005. This followed discussions between British Waterways and Brent Council, an asbestos survey and a bat survey. No evidence of bats was found prior to demolition, and it was considered that the remaining structure was not conducive to use by bats. To further reduce the possible risk to any bats, the demolition was undertaken in mid-autumn, thus avoiding both the bat breeding season and commencement of the bat 'hibernation' period. Demolition was undertaken by contractors to Brent Council. At the time of writing, discussions were continuing with British Waterways regarding the covering of the remaining hard standing with clean soil from their dam works.

Local Nature Reserve

- 3.9 The Public Notices for the Declaration of the Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Local Nature Reserve were published in the local press in early September 2005. Some form of launch event will be organised for the spring of 2006.

Welsh Harp Project Group

- 3.10 The Council are setting-up a Welsh Harp Project Group to discuss the proposals contained in a recent study by the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre Action Group and the funding streams that would be required to implement feasible options. The first meeting is due to be held in the near future.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 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 pursues other sources of finance and opportunities for partnership working that may become available. The Welsh Harp Project Group will discuss the financial implications of projects within the remit of that group.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the land owners / managers are required to consult with English Nature for any operation

in the list of 'Potentially damaging operations'; and English Nature will issue a consent for the works unless the operation is likely to have a significant impact on any of the notified features of interest on the site. 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 of the site. CROW 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.

6.0 Diversity Implications

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

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

7.1 None specific.

8.0 Environmental Implications

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

Background Papers

Dated correspondence and other documents referred to in the Report including:

Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan.

Equality Impact Assessment Completion Form: Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee: Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan: 20 January 2005. Form dated 06b.01.2005.

Contact Officers

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

Richard Saunders
Director of Environment and Culture