



Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

Monday, 5 February 2007

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 Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan and related issues. The 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.

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 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 3.2 The Management Plan was signed by English Nature (now Natural England) on 15 May 2003. Subsequent amendments have been reported to this Committee. Natural England have indicated that for minor changes to the Management Plan, there is no need to seek their formal consent.
- 3.3 The most recent re-drafting of the Management Plan was completed in early 2006; and that version will serve until the next review in 2007. The current version of the Management Plan is available on the internet 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.

Dam wall works

- 3.4 British Waterways have substantially completed their works to the dam wall. However, the reinstatement work at Neasden Recreation Ground, which was used by British Waterways as a work site, has taken longer than anticipated. Brent Council Parks Service met with British Waterways in late 2006; and Brent Council is anticipating that British Waterways will soon detail and arrange to complete the remaining re-instatement.

Cross-boundary working and enforcement

- 3.5 Barnet will be covering in their report the outcomes of meetings between officers of Barnet and Brent to discuss joint working and issues related to Environmental Health.
- 3.6 A pollution incident including waste tipping has been reported in the wet woodland area on British Waterways land on the south side of the Reservoir to the north of the North Circular Road Industrial Estate (zone 4C). At the time of the preparation of this report, the issue is under investigation and details are not available. The Environment Agency are leading the investigation and a site meeting has been arranged which will also involve British Waterways, Brent Council Environmental Health and Brent Council Parks Service.

Green Flag Award application

- 3.7 Green Flag: Brent Council Parks Service has submitted an application for the Green Flag Award 2007/08 for the Welsh Harp Open Space. The Green Flag Award is a national scheme with the aim of improving the standards of green spaces and is maintained by annual external inspection. The Green Flag Award particularly considers whether the green space is welcoming, addresses health and safety, cleanliness and maintenance, sustainability, conservation, and whether there is community involvement in the management of the green space. If successful, Brent Council would like to include other parts of the Welsh Harp in future years, including the possibility of joint applications with Barnet.

Biodiversity Action Plan

- 3.8 Brent Biodiversity Action Plan: Brent Council is currently reviewing the Borough Biodiversity Action Plan with a view to a revised Biodiversity Action Plan for the years 2007-2010.

Heritage Lottery Award

- 3.9 Maintenance of the Heritage Lottery Fund award project continues.

3.10 Kingsbury and Welsh Harp Reservoir Open Day

It is expected that the annual Kingsbury and Welsh Harp Reservoir Open Day will be held on Spring Bank Holiday Monday 28 May 2007.

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 Service Plan; both of which derive from the Council's Corporate Strategy. 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), 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 works specified in the Management Plan. This can reduce the administrative work inherent in obtaining consent for individual items 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

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