



## Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

21 July 2025

<b>Title</b>	London Borough of Barnet Welsh Harp Update
<b>Report of</b>	Executive Director, Adults, Communities and Health
<b>Wards</b>	West Hendon
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	None
<b>Enclosures</b>	Appendix A - Welsh Harp – s106 Proposal 2025/2026
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### Summary

To provide an update to the committee in relation to Council activities during Quarter 1 (Apr-Jun 2025/26) in respect of the Welsh Harp / West Hendon Playing Fields.

### Officers Recommendations

1. That the committee note the contents of this report.

## **1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED**

1.1 The Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee (WHJCC) is comprised of the Canal and Rivers Trust, Brent Council, Welsh Harp Conservation Group, Welsh Harp Sailing Association and Barnet Council. The committee is a consultative committee and meets on a quarterly basis.

1.2 During Quarter 1 (April-June 2025), the Council progressed a series of activities in relation to the management and operation of West Hendon Playing Fields / Welsh Harp. The committee are requested to note the following;

### **1.3 Management and Operations**

1.3.1 A significant fly tip clearance was carried out late April 2025, on the east bank of the Silk Stream behind the Ramsey Close neighbouring properties.

1.3.2 There remain consistent fly tipping issues at Priestly Way, located opposite the advertising hoarding. The Council commissions a third party waste contractor to support clearance. However, new hazardous waste has been added to the existing pile, creating further clearances challenges. The Council are now engaging with contractors who are able to support specialist clearances are exploring the feasibility of introducing CCTV within the area to prevent further issues and support enforcement. The Council relies on reporting to identify and clear fly tip. Please report any fly tipping around the Welsh Harp to [parks@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:parks@barnet.gov.uk)

1.3.3 A series of volunteer litter picking events have been organised by the Friends of the Welsh Harp over the spring period, with collection and clearance resources provided by the Council.

1.3.4 The Council is a member of the Thames21 Brent Catchment Partnership, and continues to work with stakeholders on the biggest issues facing the Brent River catchment, which includes the Welsh Harp. Officers attend working group meetings, such as the invasive non-native species (INNS) control group, which has recently produced an interactive map to show INNS locations and treatment plans. The long-term aim of the group is to eradicate Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed across the catchment, all of which are present at the Welsh Harp. The Council has engaged our specialist contractor for significant additional spraying, the total area of giant hogweed spot-treated this year-to-date being 2775 square metres. Japanese knotweed treatment is in progress, with additional locations identified using INNS tracker.

1.3.5 In consultation with the Friends of the Welsh Harp, Barnet Council resources have been redeployed from contractor litter picks to invasive non-native species treatment.

### **1.4 West Hendon Playing Fields Master Plan**

1.4.1 An update will be reported to the Councils Cabinet on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025, highlighted a phased approach in delivering the West Hendon Playing Fields. The report sets out the

vision for improving and enhancing the site, highlighting which elements are to be delivered under each phase and the next steps for their delivery.

## **1.5 Welsh Harp and SSSI management**

1.5.1 The Council has produced a plan relating to the use of the £220,531.05 s106 contribution for improvements and mitigation works to the SSSI. This is in relation to the West Hendon Waterside Development. Full details of the proposal can be found in Appendix A and are summarised below:

- Match funding of CRT bid for restoration of the North Marsh (including desilting, silt reprofiling, INNS management, vegetation management, breeding rafts and a new public hide)
- Upgrade of footpath network
- Habitat management (creation, enhancement and maintenance)
- Community engagement, training and site stewardship
- Collection of baseline data through ecological surveys and citizen science events
- Using data collected to inform future funding applications.

The Council work with Citizen Zoo, TCV and our term contractors to deliver the work, commencing in August 2025 and running through to early 2026.

1.5.2 In April 2023 the Council were alerted to concerns relating to the SSSI as a result of development from a property in Woolmead Avenue. This has remained under review by the Councils Planning Enforcement team who have worked with Natural England to review and resolve matters, issuing an enforcement notice in May 2023. Subsequently a retrospective application for construction work (23/2569/RCU) was refused by the London Borough of Barnet Planning Dept. A further notice was issued in November 2023, outlining a requirement to demolish and remove materials from the property. An appeal was issued in 29 January 2025 and the Councils decision was upheld. An independent inspector has provided up to 29th July 2025 to comply with the terms of the enforcement notice or obtain relevant consents. The Council will continue to monitor.

1.5.3 The council continues to work in partnership with Brent Council, Canal and Rivers Trust, The GLA, The London Wildlife Trust and Thames 21 in delivering the overarching Vision for the Welsh Harp, Welsh Harp Management Plan and Brent Catchment Partnership & Action Plan.

1.5.4 Barratt London provided a briefing to Members on (Thursday 29th May). The purpose of the meeting was to update Councillors on the progress being made on the Silkstream Bridge proposals and to update on next steps including:

- setting out the road map to delivering the bridge
- preparing a stakeholder engagement strategy

Barratt London will circulate further communications later this year.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The terms of reference of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee include that it considers and co-ordinates all the interests of recreation, leisure, maintenance and nature conservation with the object of protecting the Welsh Harp Reservoir and

surrounding open land as a unique environment for both recreation and wildlife conservation.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

3.1 N/A

### **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

4.1 The Council will continue to develop the new and emerging policies as set out in section 1.2.1 of this report.

### **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

#### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

5.1.1 Following the declaration of a climate emergency, delivering and implementing the Sustainability Strategy, Climate Action Plan, Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy is a key corporate priority for the Council.

#### **5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

5.2.1 The programme of activities listed within this report are delivered within existing resources, some initiatives or tasks may require additional investment which will be considered in the development of new policies and assessed through the Councils budget setting process.

#### **5.3 Social Value**

5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

#### **5.4 Legal and Constitutional References**

5.4.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty under the 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 Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to acquire, declare and manage nature reserves. However, English Nature must be consulted by the Authority in the use of the powers given by section 21. The 1949 Act states that a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) must be managed in such a way to ensure that use of the site does not result in any damage to its natural features.

5.4.2 As set out in the Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee:

“to consider and co-ordinate all the interests of recreation / leisure / maintenance / nature conservation and statutory requirements of the Canals and Rivers Trust (CRT) and the Environment Agency at the Welsh Harp; with the object of protecting the Welsh Harp Reservoir and surrounding open land as a unique environment for both recreation and wildlife conservation”.

Barnet’s Constitution – Article 8 – Joint Arrangements- states at paragraph 8.1 that the Council may establish joint arrangements with one or more Local Authorities. Such arrangements may involve the appointment of a Joint Committee with these Local Authorities.

5.5 **Risk Management**

5.5.1 There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

5.6 **Equalities and Diversity**

5.6.1 Parks and Open Spaces benefit all sectors of the community by improving the local environment. Maintenance is carried out according to the management plan and takes into account requests from residents, users and Members. Improvements are made, wherever possible, to ensure equal access for all users.

The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies **to have due regard** to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services

5.7 **Corporate Parenting Principles**

5.7.1 N/A

5.8 **Consultation and Engagement**

5.8.1 The Consultative Committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis, the committee comprises the land owners, legislative bodies, and third sector volunteer groups who work within the reserve to deliver positive outcomes.

5.9 **Insight**

5.9.1 None

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1 The Welsh Harp Management Plan can be found on Brent Council's website: [www.brent.gov.uk/parks](http://www.brent.gov.uk/parks) in the biodiversity section.
- 6.2 [West Hendon Playing Fields Outline Business Case – Policy and Resources Committee 16 July 2021, Agenda Item 9](#)
- 6.3 [Parks and Open Spaces Update – Environment and Climate Change Committee 9 June 2022, Agenda Item 9](#)
- 6.4 [Welsh Harp Vision Update – Environment and Climate Change Committee 6 September 2022, Agenda Item 14](#)