



Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

19 July 2011

Report from the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

For Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

Welsh Harp Management Plan

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan. The Management Plan is jointly managed by the three main local land-holding organisations: 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 / Brent Reservoir Management Plan

- 3.1 The Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan is available on the internet at the Brent Council website www.Brent.gov.uk/parks

Management works

- 3.2 Water weed issues: The Welsh Harp Sailing Association have been leading on the problem of excessive water weed on the Reservoir.

3.3 Parks Warden Service

The Parks Warden service was reduced as part of the recent reorganisation of Brent Council. Currently there are a maximum of two mobile wardens on duty at any one time. It is anticipated using up to three agency staff to increase coverage from August to October. The grounds maintenance team visits the Welsh Harp at regular intervals.

Heritage Lottery Award

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

Biodiversity Action Plan

- 3.5 The Welsh Harp is an important area for several habitats and species; and this is recognised by the Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserve status. Despite the annual work to control tree growth in the marshland edge of the Brent Reservoir, scrub appears to be increasing in the marshland and as belts on the acid grassland at Neasden Recreation Ground. Japanese Knotweed is also encroaching into both habitats. While the conservation and restoration of these habitats has been identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan, the most effective action within the resources available is needed to conserve and restore habitat. The Sports and Parks Service are investigating if additional cutting and use of machinery are possible; and the possibility of grant funding for the acid grassland. As noted above, the Welsh Harp Sailing Association are leading on removing excess plant growth from the open water of the reservoir; but long term solutions may need to involve a catchment management approach to reduce nutrient levels in the river and at some stage, removal of alluvium from the reservoir. Summary information can be accessed on the BARS (Biodiversity Action Reporting System) website which is the online system for national reporting of Biodiversity Action Plans: see <http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk/>

Events / Other

- 3.6 Brent Council Sports Service and Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre: The Healthy Walks Programme continues to March 2012. Walks meet at the Welsh Harp Open Space car park, Birchen Grove, every Thursday (except on Bank / Public Holidays) from 10am-11am. The walks are 'low to moderate' in pace. For details contact Brent Council Sports Service, tel: 020 8937 3707, [www. Brent.gov.uk/sports](http://www.Brent.gov.uk/sports)
- 3.7 Capital Ring: Stocks of the leaflets are available from Barnet, and Brent Councils.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None specific, but some of the priorities identified in the Management Plan will require additional resources and decisions by, as appropriate, Brent Council, Barnet Council or British Waterways, 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.
- 4.2 Financial implications of restructuring proposals are detailed in other Council reports.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Under the the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, land owners or occupiers are required to give notice to and consult with Natural England for any operation in an area of land that is of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features (this requirement applies to operations within a SSSI, and to operations outside the SSSI that may affect the features of interest); and Natural England will issue consent, issue consent with conditions or refuse consent. 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 and enhancement of the site.
- 5.2 It is good practice for land owners or occupiers to produce Management Plans for the SSSI, which when approved by Natural England, 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.
- 5.3 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires that from 1 October 2006 all public authorities in England and Wales have a general duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions.

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.

6.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment was prepared in relation to the proposals for the restructuring of the Warden Service.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

7.1 None specific.

8.0 Environmental Implications

8.1 The Welsh Harp Management Plan co-ordinates environmental works in the Reservoir area.

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 Leslie Williams, Strategy and Service Development Officer, Sports and Parks Service, Cultural Services, Environment and Neighbourhoods, Brent Council, Brent House, 349-357 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 6BZ
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