



**Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee**  
29 November 2016

**Report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration & Environment**

For Action

Wards Affected: ALL

**Report Title:** Welsh Harp Management Plan

Forward Plan Ref: Not applicable.

## **1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report presents progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan since the last meeting of the Committee and during the 2016/17 year to date. The Management Plan is jointly managed by the three main land-holding organisations: Brent Council, the London Borough of Barnet, and the Canal and River Trust.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the Report.

## **3.0 DETAILS**

- 3.1 The current version of the Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan (dated 15 March 2016) is available on the Brent Council website at <https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16404048/brent-reservoir-welsh-harp-management-plan-15-03-2016.pdf>
- 3.2. The Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan includes an Action Plan for the current year; which for this committee report is updated as Appendix 1. The 'Progress' column summarises current progress.
- 3.3 Byelaws. Brent Council have received new advice/guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on what supporting evidence would be needed to support an application under the new DCLG process.
- 3.4 Rough sleepers: There was one encampment on the southern / Neasden Recreation Ground side of the reservoir in October 2016. Brent Council has investigated.

- 3.5 The weekly walks programme at the Welsh Harp continues. Walks generally attract 15-25 people and are led by a walk leader. These take place on Thursdays from 10-11am meeting at Birchen Grove Car Park, Kingsbury NW9. The walks are free of charge. A review of the walks programme is being undertaken and this has included public consultation via the Brent Council website on Healthy Walks and Outdoor Gyms.
- 3.6 Removal of timber toe-boarding. Committee asked, at the last meeting for information on a proposed project to remove redundant timber toe-boarding from some banks of the River Brent. The Brent Catchment Partnership are currently working on some of the details.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan is a long-term document and not all works are feasible in the short-term. Works listed in the management plan include the programmed operational works and longer-term works to maintain, restore and enhance the Welsh Harp area. Works are undertaken only where the budgets or resources are available. Programmed operational works are undertaken only within the existing budgets.
- 4.2 A significant amount of work is undertaken, or in kind, by the voluntary sector, and by the volunteers of the sailing clubs, conservation groups and other community organisations. In addition, the Council and partners, endeavour where feasible, to seek additional funding from grants and other sources.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Under 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, and also public bodies, are required to give notice to and consult with Natural England where they wish to carry out, or cause or permit to be carried out 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 site of special scientific interest ('SSSI'), and to operations outside the SSSI that may affect the features of interest); and Natural England will issue consent, with conditions or refuse consent. Failing to follow this process is a criminal offence which may result in a fine and a restoration order. 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. When advice is obtained from Natural England prior to carrying out the works an explanation of how the Council has taken into account any advice Natural England has given should be provided –

The Council must be able to show that it considered alternatives that could reduce the impact on the SSSI –

The Council should demonstrate how the Council has assessed differing interests (including the special interests of the SSSI) in deciding to go ahead with the works.

- 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 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.
- 5.4 The owner of land included in a SSSI has a legal duty to inform Natural England within 28 days of any changes in ownership or occupation of the site, including leases, easements and rights.

## **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 (IF APPROPRIATE)**

- 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 include:  
Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan (version 15 March 2016).

## **CONTACT OFFICERS**

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## **Strategic Director**