



Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

15 November 2012

Report from the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services

For Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

Welsh Harp Management Plan

Forward Plan Ref:

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 land-holding organisations: Brent Council, the London Borough of Barnet, and the Canal & River Trust (formerly British Waterways).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the Report.

3.0 Detail

Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan

- 3.1 At the last meeting this Committee recommended the revised Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan subject to amendments agreed by the Committee. Most of these amendments have been made including the inclusion of maps indicating the boundaries of the Site of Special Scientific Interest and of the Local Nature Reserve. The list of the current sailing clubs needs to be updated.

- 3.2. A digital copy of the Management Plan is available with this report. Up to date versions are also uploaded to the Brent Council website at <http://www.brent.gov.uk/pks.nsf/pages/LBB-67>

Management works

- 3.3 While the Management Plan is a long-term document, the Action Plan lists the priorities for the current financial year. The Action Plan is included in the management plan.

3.4 Planning Application for Multi-Use Games Area

A Planning Application for a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in Neasden Recreation Ground, near to the site of the former pavilion, is available on Brent's planning web pages:

<https://forms.brent.gov.uk/servlet/ep.ext?extId=101150&reference=109324&st=PL>

- 3.5 The application is being made by Brent Council Sports and Parks Service and has been jointly funded by Brent Council and NHS Brent. Neasden Recreation Ground has been identified as one of the priority locations in the Planning for Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy 2008 – 2021, based on the population density of young people. Similar MUGAs have been installed at other locations around the borough and are very popular with young people. The development will consist of installing a MUGA that measures 18 metres by 30 metres with three metre perimeter fencing. MUGAs are a cost effective way of providing an ideal sporting and social play area for teenagers, older children and young adults. Markings and goal equipment offer predominately two sporting options; basketball and football, though they can be used for some other games too. Their heavy duty design renders an extensive life span, requiring minimal maintenance to surfaces and perimeter fencing. The fencing provides a safe, enclosed and dedicated area and reduces the chance of balls exiting the court into the park and dogs running onto the court and interrupting play. By providing a secure area, the MUGA is often used for other activities such as very young children, with parents, learning to ride bicycles when no one else is using the court. The MUGA will be available for use, free of charge. Floodlighting is not proposed and the lack of this provision should minimise recreational noise during the hours of darkness, and any affect of lighting on bats.

Events / Other

- 3.6 Brent Council Sports and Parks Service organises weekly leader led Healthy Walks. Those interested in taking part 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

- 3.7 Capital Ring: The Capital Ring is a round-London recreational walking route of about 70 miles and a section passes through the Welsh Harp. The walk can be walked in sections and 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.
- 4.2 For Brent Council Sports and Parks Service, the Welsh Harp Management Plan is implemented and improvements programmed via the Council's Corporate Strategy and service strategies. Thus implementation is dependent upon revenue budgets for grounds maintenance and for parks management and capital budgets for specific project work. The Sports and Parks Service pursues other sources of finance and opportunities for partnership working that may become available.

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 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 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.

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:

Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan.

Contact Officers

Leslie Williams, Strategy and Service Development Officer, Sports and Parks Service, Tel: 020 8937 5619, E-mail: Leslie.Williams@Brent.gov.uk,

Sue Harper:
Director of Environment and
Neighbourhood Services