

AGENDA ITEM: 6

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Meeting	Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee
Date	31 October 2006
Subject	Welsh Harp Management Plan
Report of	Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport
Summary	To report the position on the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) byelaws and on-going site management

Officer Contributors	Head of Environment and Transport
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	West Hendon
Enclosures	None
For decision by	Joint Committee
Function of	Executive
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in (if appropriate)	N/A

Contact for further information: Mark Evison, Greenspaces Officer, 020 8359 7826.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the Joint Committee notes the report.

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

2.1 Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee on 9 December 2003 – approved the proposed boundary of the LNR.

2.2 Barnet's Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee on 15 March 2005 – approved the designation of a Local Nature Reserve on the Welsh Harp.

2.3 Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee of 15 June 2005 – approved draft byelaws.

2.4 Barnet's Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee on 5 September 2006 and Cabinet on 16 October 2006 endorsed the draft byelaws for formal approval by full Council on 7 November 2006.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The ongoing management of the Welsh Harp contributes towards a Clean, Green and Safe borough, as described in Barnet's Corporate Plan 2006/07 – 2009/10.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1 None in the context of this report.

5. FINANCIAL, STAFFING, ICT AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6. LEGAL ISSUES

6.1 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.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

7.1 The Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee, as set out in its Constitution, include:
“to consider and co-ordinate all the interests of recreation / leisure / maintenance / nature conservation and statutory requirements of the British Waterways Board and the Environment Agency at the Welsh Harp; with the object of protecting the Welsh Harp and surrounding open land as a unique environment for both recreation and wildlife conservation.”

8. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Local Nature Reserve and Bye-laws

- 8.1 The draft byelaws agreed at the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee of 15 June 2005 have been approved informally by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Cabinet has agreed to refer the byelaw report of the Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee to the Council in order that application may be made to the Minister for the Environment to sanction them formally.

Cross Boundary Working

- 8.2 A meeting was held on 3 October between Brent Park Service, West Hendon Safer Neighbourhood Team and Barnet Greenspaces to discuss ways of working together to combat antisocial behaviour.
- 8.3 The outcomes of the meeting:
- Physical security has been a success against vehicles
 - Contact other Local Authorities to discuss their anti-rave procedures
 - Police can deploy officers with advanced warning of an event
 - Police advice to residents: call Noise and Nuisance and call 999
 - Analysis of dates over past years shows no pattern
 - Early reporting is essential to preventing an event occurring
- 8.4 A further joint meeting is planned for mid-October.

Vandalism to Bird Hides

- 8.5 The Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor assessed the bird hide. His view was that because the building is isolated and hidden from view it would always be a target. Further reinforcement would give vandals a greater challenge. They have a great deal of time to work on the destruction. The legal agreement with Heritage Lottery Fund would require re-negotiation before any action like this could be taken.
- 8.6 New window shutters, steel door and lock have been fitted to the new bird hide to secure it over the winter period. It is anticipated that vandalism will decrease during the winter. A decision on the future of the bird hide will be taken next year if the vandalism continues.

9. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 The Welsh Harp Management Plan can be found on Brent Council's website: www.brent.gov.uk/parks in the biodiversity section.

Legal – PJ
CFO – DM