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Meeting Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee
Date 2 July 2008
Subject **Welsh Harp Management Plan**
Report of Cabinet Member for Environment and
 Transport
Summary To report the position on the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and
 on-going site management

Officer Contributors Jenny Warren, Green Space Services Manager
Status (public or exempt) Public
Wards affected West Hendon
Enclosures None
For decision by Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee
Function of Executive
Reason for urgency /
exemption from call-in (if
appropriate) N/A

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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the contents of the report be noted.

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee on 9 December 2003 – approved the proposed boundary of the Local Nature Reserve.
- 2.2 Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee on 15 March 2005 agreed the designation of a Local Nature Reserve on the Welsh Harp.
- 2.3 Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee of 15 June 2005 agreed draft byelaws.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Council formally endorsed the draft byelaws on 7 November 2007.

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 2008/09 – 2011/12.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1 None in the context of this report.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

5.1 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.

6. FINANCIAL, STAFFING, ICT AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Signage and an additional litterbin is to be funded from general revenue budget estimated at £2,000. Repair and or replacement bird hide to be funded by section 106 contributions up to approx. £6,000.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

7.1 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.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 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.”

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1. Current ongoing management issues.

9.1.1 Quotations and designs for the refurbishment of the bird hide

Following further vandalism to the Barnet bird hide at the end of December 2007 it has been necessary to assess options for repair, replacement or removal of the hide. This hide was funded by a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant in 1999 that contracts the Council to maintain the hide for a period of ten years following completion. The hide itself cost £10,000 (excluding foundations, piling etc) in 2004 and has since been subject to on-going repairs and maintenance due to vandalism as detailed below.

Vandalism expenditure to date on the Barnet bird hide.

Financial Year	Expenditure due to vandalism
2004/05	£1,622.00
2005/06	£203.00
2006/07	£2,545.00
2007/08	£300.00
Total	£4,670.00

Due to the on-going vandalism, the HLF would consider alternatives and or variations to this structure to make the hide more secure or replace it with an alternative structure that is less prone to these acts of vandalism. Listed below are a variety of options for consideration by the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee to determine the preferred option/s to be put forward to the HLF to seek an agreement to proceed with a repair and or alterations to the hide.

A. Re-build hide and install perimeter palisade fencing – Approx. £5,000.
Repair structure to traditional hide making good all damage, install palisade fencing around three sides projecting into the water with locked gated access. This option will prevent access to the hide from the land whilst maintaining the traditional look of the hide. A downside is that the fencing around the hide would not be in keeping with the open character of the reserve and may create a further challenge for those concerned resulting in further damage.

B. Re-build hide with re-enforced frontage – Approx. £3,000.
Replace front of hide with steel including steel door securing to concrete base and roof, finished with paint. Re-build and decorate inside hide as required. It is thought that this will provide additional security preventing access from around or through the door, which is where the damage is centred on in gaining access into the hide.

C. Remove hide and replace with sleeper structure to 1.2 m height – Approx. £5,000. Remove and replace hide with walled structure to provide shield from birds, constructed from sleepers and ironwork. Without the presence of a roof or door this structure will no longer provide a dry refuge or a structure into which the vandals can break in; the platform located within 10 metres has not been subject to vandalism.

D. Remove hide and replace with sleeper structure to 1.2 m height with canopy roof – Approx. £6,000. Replace hide with walled structure to provide shield from birds, constructed from sleepers and ironwork. Install canopy roof to provide dry cover, which will be open for all to use, this may continue to encourage the youths to gather at the hide but there will no longer be a need to gain access coupled with a new robust design this will be more resistant to vandalism.

9.1.2 Japanese Knotweed Control Programme

A three year programme to treat the Japanese knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed commenced in Spring 2008 following a site survey. Complete Weed Control has been appointed to treat all occurrences of the above this year, with a continuing programme for a further two years to retreat and ensure eradication.

9.1.3 Bye Law Enforcement and Litter Patrols

Weekend litter patrols commenced in May for the duration of the summer. The litter patrol teams will visit the Welsh Harp daily over the weekends and bank holidays to litter pick, empty litterbins and address anti-social behaviour including BBQ's. The weekend emergency call out rota for Greenspaces has been revised and provided to the emergency suite in addition to a rota detailing the litter patrols available at the weekends should they also need to be called upon in an emergency.

9.1.4 Infrastructure and signage

No swimming signs have been installed along the waters edge, other information signage has been identified as requiring rationalisation and or replacement to increase effectiveness and reduce clutter. This will include the re-siting of current signs and the replacement of existing signs. The visitor information signs located at the information centre in Woodfield Park are being updated and will be replaced in 2008/09. An additional litterbin has been ordered for installation between the entrance to Woodfield Park and the current litterbin located at the slip way.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

Legal – PD
CFO – DM