

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee</b> 16<sup>th</sup> July 2009</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Report from the Director of Environment and Culture</b></p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards Affected: Welsh Harp and Dollis Hill</p>	
<p><b>Welsh Harp Management Plan</b></p>	

## 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan and related issues. 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 Management Plan is undergoing an annual review. Brent Council Parks Service will edit comments received by 31 July 2009 into a revised draft in time for the next (autumn) meeting of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee. To view the current Management Plan approved by the WHJCC on 10 November 2008, go to <http://www.brent.gov.uk/pks.nsf/Parks/LBB-67>. A map of the zones is attached to this report.

## **Management works**

- 3.2 A verbal update may be available at the time of the meeting.
- 3.3 Visitor numbers: Members enquired at the last meeting of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee, if data was available on visitor numbers? Brent Council undertakes an annual Parks Customer Survey which is posted to a random ten per cent of households in each Ward in Brent; and there is approximately a 13-15% return rate. Information is sought on a range of issues and on the parks that people visit. The survey is undertaken in about April -May each year. Usage figures can then be extrapolated to cover the remainder of the population. It is emphasised that the usage figures are estimates rather than actual counts; not least there are social, geographic and statistical factors that may affect the results. A further complication is that not everyone would be aware of the exact boundaries of e.g. the 'Welsh Harp Open Space' and for the purposes of this discussion it could be assumed that many visitors refer to the 'Welsh Harp' in general. The results of the 2008 survey indicate that there were an estimated 447,696 visits to the Welsh Harp during the year prior to the survey.

## **British Waterways**

- 3.4 British Waterways hope to update the meeting on progress on the clean-up on the southern side of the Reservoir. Officers met in early June and discussed the possibility of annual monitoring of the woodland and marshland between the North Circular Road industrial estate and the Reservoir. This could jointly involve British Waterways, the Environment Agency, and Brent Environmental Health.
- 3.5 Swimming: Officers discussed the continuing use of appropriate combinations of land and water-based notices, wardening and other media to deter swimming in the Reservoir.
- 3.6 Fishing: Fishing is not permitted at the Brent Reservoir. Officers discussed the continuing use of combinations of public information and of wardening to deter fishing at the Reservoir.

## **Environment Agency**

- 3.7 Welsh Harp issues are led by the Brent and Crane Environment Management Team. They are continuing work on pollution prevention upstream of the Welsh Harp. Much of their work in this respect is reactive; and they will follow-up and plan future work if there are reports of incidents or other issues.

## **Heritage Lottery Award**

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

## **Biodiversity Action Plan**

- 3.9 National Indicator 197: The Brent Reservoir (Welsh Harp) has been assessed by Brent to have met the criteria to have scored for National Indicator 197 ('Improving Biodiversity'). The first assessment covered the five-year period to 31 March 2009. At the last meeting, Members requested clarification on the inclusion of the Brent Reservoir Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in National Indicator 197 ('Improving Biodiversity'). While it was always intended that the land area of SSSIs were to be excluded from National Indicator 197 (partly because SSSIs are covered by another assessment relating to statutory sites), guidance on the inclusion of Local Nature Reserves (LNR) has differed. DEFRA issued revised guidance in December 2008, but because of differences in the designation of Local Sites (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) between London and other areas of the country, advice from Natural England, the GLA and the London Boroughs Biodiversity Forum is that, in London, the areas of LNRs should be included within the assessment of NI 197, except where the same land is also a SSSI (in which case it should be excluded).

## **Events / Other**

- 3.10 Kingsbury and Welsh Harp Reservoir Open Day: The event was held on the Spring Bank Holiday Monday.
- 3.11 Brent Council Sports Service: The Healthy Walks Programme continues to March 2010. 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)
- 3.12 SUSTRANS have published the results of their consultation on proposed 'Greenways' (cycle routes that are also used for walkers and others). They point out that the consultation was primarily concerned with routes in the West London Boroughs including Brent, but that at least one proposed route in Barnet was included in the consultation proposals. For the Welsh Harp concerns were raised by local groups and individuals particularly in relation to a proposed eastern path through sensitive habitats. This has now been removed from the proposals. Routes that remain in the proposals include a section of the Capital Ring; the route from Wood Lane to Birchen Grove; and a route from Birchen Grove passing near to the south-west of the dam wall and then into Neasden Recreation Ground and from there towards Gladstone Park. Details of the proposed routes are available on the Sustrans website at: [www.sustrans.org.uk/goal](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/goal)

or from Sustrans, Greenways Manager, 70 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London EC1M 6EJ. Detailed discussions on the feasibility and design of the routes will need to be undertaken with the Boroughs and others.

- 3.13 Capital Ring: A revised version of the 'Walk 10' leaflet (South Kenton to Hendon which covers the Welsh Harp) is available. This will apparently be the final print-run: future versions will be available to download from the internet. If organisations need stocks of the leaflet, please contact Brent Council Parks Service.

#### **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.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), 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.

## **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 Mr Leslie Williams, Environmental Policy Officer, Brent Parks Service, 660 Harrow Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 2HB. Tel.: 020 8937 5628. E-mail: Leslie.Williams@Brent.gov.uk

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