

	<p>Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee 23 March 2011</p> <p>Report from the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods</p>
	<p>For Information Wards Affected: ALL</p>
<p>Welsh Harp Management Plan</p>	

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 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 Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan is available on the internet at the Brent Council website www.Brent.gov.uk/parks
- 3.2 Barnet Council will be reporting, separately, on the Action Plan.

Management works

- 3.3 Water weed issues: The Welsh Harp Sailing Association have been leading on the problem of excessive water weed on the Reservoir.
- 3.4 Management works: Winter coppicing to conserve the floodplain marsh has been undertaken on some sections along the shore of Neasden Recreation Ground.

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- 3.5 Acid grassland: Officers are drafting a joint grant application, with some other London Boroughs, for the restoration of acid grassland. At the Welsh Harp this may include several areas at Neasden Recreation Ground, and on the north side of the Reservoir. Several of these are linear, corresponding to surface geology and coincident with some to the main recreational paths around the Reservoir.

3.6 **Parks Warden Service**

Restructuring of the Parks Warden Service across Brent envisages an overall reduction in the number of full time equivalent posts and including the deletion of the static Wardens. The number of mobile Wardens will be increased providing a more flexible response, while the Grounds Maintenance team will have a more visible presence at some parks and will take on much of the litter-picking and other maintenance works previously performed by the static Wardens. There may be some temporary summer wardens. The detailed operational deployment has still to be programmed and then fine-tuned.

Environment Agency

- 3.7 The River Brent Catchment Partnership has been working with British Waterways and the Boroughs to discuss joint working between agencies and Boroughs along the course of the River Brent.

London Green Grid

- 3.8 Details of this initiative to consider green space are available from the All London Green Grid team. For the Welsh Harp, the process has looked at connections to green spaces both within Barnet and Brent.

Heritage Lottery Award

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

Biodiversity Action Plan

- 3.10 The Welsh Harp is an important area for several habitats and species; and this is recognised by the Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserve status. The conservation and restoration of these habitats has been identified in the Biodiversity Action Plans of the Boroughs. Summary information can be accessed on the BARS (Biodiversity Action Reporting System) website which is the online system for national reporting of Biodiversity Action Plans: see <http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/>

Events / Other

- 3.11 Brent Council Sports Service and Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre: The Healthy Walks Programme continues to March 2012. 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
- 3.12 Capital Ring: Stocks of the leaflets are available from Barnet, and Brent Councils.
- 3.13 "175 Years of Brent Reservoir": Barnet Council's (Hendon's Church Farmhouse Museum) is being displayed in Brent Museum's Community Gallery, Willesden Green Library Centre, NW10, tel: 020 8937 3600, until the end of March 2011.

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.
- 4.2 Financial implications of restructuring proposals are detailed in other Council reports.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Under the 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 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.
- 6.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared in relation to the proposals for the restructuring of the Warden Service.

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

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