

	<p>Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee</p> <p>19 November 2014</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Title</p>	<p>Welsh Harp Management Plan</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Report of</p>	<p>Street Scene Director</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards</p>	<p>West Hendon</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix A – Preventative measures for rough sleepers Appendix B – Tree Management Plan</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Officer Contact Details</p>	<p>Tracy Sawyer, Parks and Open Spaces Officer, tracy.sawyer@barnet.gov.uk, 0208 359 7824.</p>

Summary
<p>To update the committee regarding the on-going site management issues and report the position on the Local Nature Reserve (LNR).</p>

Recommendations
<p>That the committee consider and note the contents of this report and to invite the committee to make comments on the contents of the report.</p>

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee comprises of British Waterways, Brent Council, Welsh Harp Conservation Group, Welsh Harp Sailing Association and Barnet Council. The committee is a consultative committee only and meets on a quarterly basis.
- 1.2 The committee is invited to note and make comments on the on-going site management issues during this quarter as follows:

1.3 Rough Sleepers

A number of locations throughout the Borough have been experiencing problems with illegal encampments, with a particular location in the Welsh Harp being subjected to repeated incursions. This area is located near Verulum Court and behind the bill boards that are located along the Edgware Road A5. There has been an additional three illegal encampments in this area taking the total to nine encampments to date.

Name of Park	Month	Number of illegal encampments
Welsh Harp	July 2014	0
Welsh Harp	August 2014	3
Welsh Harp	September	0

The Council works closely with the local Safer Neighbourhood Team to move on illegal encampments which also includes wider authorities such as the UK Border Agency. The area is monitored regularly with swift action taken to remove the encampments, but despite this pro-active approach the encampments are continuing to re-occur.

Possible options to prevent the number of encampments that are both costly to the Council and damaging to the local environment were discussed at the last committee with a requirement to present a series of possibilities at the next meeting as detailed below and attached in Appendix A.

Hogging Footpath

Extend the hogging footpath from the first bird hide which is located off Cool Oak Lane to the rear of Woolmead Avenue through to the Edgware Road and Priestley Way. This would encourage positive and regular use of this currently inaccessible area by the general public which would in turn dissuade rough sleepers and illegal encampments. There are concerns that this would have a negative impact on the wildlife.

Removal of billboards

Remove the billboards that are situated along the Edgware Road, located on the edge of the Welsh Harp. On further investigation it has been identified that the bill boards are situated on private land as such the council cannot remove the bill boards as the land is privately managed.

Fencing

Installation of a metal palisade fence to the side of Verulum Court along the Edgware Road behind the billboards, ending at Priestley Way at the Environment Agency vehicular gate.

In addition to the above options the lifting of trees in this area was discussed and requested. The lifting of tree canopies in the problematic areas would assist in combatting illegal encampments and rough sleepers. As such Natural England was approached for consent to carry out tree management works to facilitate the above approach and this has been granted. Trees T8 to T13 in the tree management plan were identified for 5 yearly works, which are due to commence in November /December 2014 as shown on Appendix B.

1.5 Japanese Knotweed Control Programme.

A new two year contract commenced in March 2014, this has followed on from the previous three year programme that has seen a significant reduction in the presence of knotweed throughout the site.

A full survey of the site was carried out and treatment of the knotweed has been completed via stem injection. Before the first treatment of the year commences in 2015 a full survey of the site will be carried out.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The terms of reference of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee include that it considers and co-ordinates all the interests of recreation, leisure, maintenance and nature conservation with the object of protecting the Welsh Harp Reservoir and surrounding open land as a unique environment for both recreation and wildlife conservation.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 None

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The committee note the actions being implemented as set out under section one.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The Councils Corporate Plan 2013 – 2016 identifies as one of its Corporate Priorities the need to maintain a well-designed, attractive and accessible place, with sustainable infrastructure across the borough. We will continue to

maintain and improve the borough's parks and green spaces for residents to enjoy.

But we are determined to do more than this. Encouraging residents to use parks and green spaces as a place for physical activity, entertainment, play and to enjoy nature will help them to improve their health, well-being and encourage a sense of community.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 Any costs incurred from the programmes and initiatives will be met within the existing Street Scene budget.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 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.

5.3.2 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”.

5.4 Risk Management

5.4.1 There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.5.1 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.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

5.6.1 The Consultative Committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis, the committee comprises of the land owners, legislative bodies, and third sector volunteer groups who work within the reserve to deliver positive outcomes.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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