



Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

27 July 2022

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| Title | London Borough of Barnet Welsh Harp Update |
| Report of | Executive Director, Adults and Health |
| Wards | West Hendon |
| Status | Public |
| Urgent | No |
| Key | None |
| Enclosures | None |
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Summary

To provide an update to the committee in relation to Council activities during Quarter 1 (April-June 2022) in respect of the Welsh Harp / West Hendon Playing Fields.

Officers Recommendations

1. That the committee note the contents of this report.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee (WHJCC) is comprised of Canals and Rivers Trust, Brent Council, Welsh Harp Conservation Group, Welsh Harp Sailing Association and Barnet Council. The committee is a consultative committee and meets on a quarterly basis.
- 1.2 During April – June 2022 (Quarter 1), the Council progressed a series of activities in relation to the management and operation of West Hendon Playing Fields / Welsh Harp. The committee are requested to note the following;

1.2.1 New Administration Priorities

- 1.2.1.1 On the 24th May 2022, the Councils new administration declared a climate and biodiversity emergency in Barnet and a commitment to establish a citizens assembly on climate change.
- 1.2.1.2 A further report was presented to the Councils Environment and Climate Change Committee (ECC) on 9 June 2022 in which Committee approved drawing up such proposals for an Assembly which will inform the development of the Councils emerging Sustainability Strategy.
- 1.2.1.3 A report providing an update on the Councils Parks and Open Spaces Strategy was also presented at ECC, setting out the proposed approach in delivering the new Administration's priorities in respect of parks and open spaces.
- 1.2.1.4 ECC approved the creation of a new Parks and Open Strategy for Barnet which will consider future statutory duties relating to open space, biodiversity, climate change, conservation, ecology and the environment.
- 1.2.1.5 It is recognised that open spaces form part of a vital biodiversity network and any emerging strategy will also take into consideration the development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Barnet, which includes the recruitment of a Biodiversity and Conversation Officer to support future implementation.
- 1.2.1.6 A programme of work is currently under review in relation to creating these policies (Parks and Open Spaces and a Biodiversity Strategy) and the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee will be a key stakeholder as part of any future consultation and engagement process.

1.3 Management and Operations

There have been no reported illegal encampments during Q1, the Councils Greenspaces and Leisure Team continue to work closely with the Barnet Community Safety Team, the Local Police and other partners to identify and remove encampments when notified.

In response to the increased attendances and operational pressures throughout the

pandemic, the Council appointed ParkGuard to deliver a pilot parks patrol service. The pilot focused on key objectives to engage with residents, inform of any relative information (such as booking processes) and support enforcement operations.

The Council has re-commissioned the support of Parkguard Ltd to assist with park patrols (Fri-Sun) throughout the summer. Their primary role will be to support current public service provision, focusing on delivery that supports Council core services in fulfilling responsibilities. This will be achieved by providing visibility patrols with an emphasis engaging with the public, increasing public reassurance, and improving community safety.

Barnet's Street Cleansing Team will continue to be supportive in providing litter clearing equipment (litter pickers and bags) and will collect all / any arising from the organised group activities around the Welsh Harp.

1.4 West Hendon Playing Fields Master Plan

- 1.4.1 The outline business case for the West Hendon Playing Fields Master plan was approved at Policy and Resources Committee 16 June 2021. This included capital funding of £18.8m to deliver the scheme.

The Council also remains in dialogue with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and the Football Foundation in relation to the submission of future funding applications to deliver court and pitch improvements at West Hendon Playing Fields..

- 1.4.2 Through reasonable means of selection, the Council has appointed the Landscape Institute to coordinate a design competition. This procurement will enable the appointment of a Landscape Architect to assist with developing the design in preparation for planning.

1.5 Welsh Harp and SSSI management

- 1.5.1 The council in partnership with Brent Council, Canals and Rivers Trust, The GLA, The London Wildlife Trust and Thames 21 is developing an overarching Vision for the Welsh Harp and a review of the Management Plan.

Full update is subject to a separate agenda item.

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 N/A

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 The Council will continue to develop the new and emerging policies as set out in section 1.2.1 of this report.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 Following the declaration of a climate emergency, delivering and implementing the Sustainability Strategy, Climate Action Plan, Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy is a key corporate priority for the Council.

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

5.2.1 The programme of activities listed within this report are delivered within existing resources, some initiatives or tasks may require additional investment which will be considered in the development of new policies and assessed through the Councils budget setting process.

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 As set out in the Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee:
“to consider and co-ordinate all the interests of recreation / leisure / maintenance / nature conservation and statutory requirements of the Canals and Rivers Trust (CRT) and the Environment Agency at the Welsh Harp; with the object of protecting the Welsh Harp Reservoir and surrounding open land as a unique environment for both recreation and wildlife conservation”.

Barnet’s Constitution – Article 8 – Joint Arrangements- states at paragraph 8.1 that the Council may establish joint arrangements with one or more Local Authorities. Such arrangements may involve the appointment of a Joint Committee with these Local Authorities.

5.4 Insight

5.4.1 None

5.5 **Social Value**

- 5.5.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

5.6 **Risk Management**

- 5.6.1 *There are no risk management issues associated with this report.*

5.7 **Equalities and Diversity**

- 5.7.1 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.

The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies **to have due regard** to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services

5.8 **Corporate Parenting Principles**

- 5.8.1 N/A

5.9 **Consultation and Engagement**

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

5.10 **Environmental**

- 5.10.1 N/A

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.

- 6.2 [West Hendon Playing Fields Outline Business Case – Policy and Resources Committee 16 July 2021, Agenda Item 9](#)
- 6.3 [Parks and Open Spaces Update – Environment and Climate Change Committee 9 June 2022, Agenda Item 9](#)