

Our Ref CRTR-POL-2024-41805

Tuesday 18 June 2024

Dear Planning Policy team,

Proposed Main Modifications to the Barnet Local Plan

Thank you for your consultation on the above.

The Canal & River Trust are the charity who look after and bring to life 2000 miles of canals & rivers. Our waterways contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time. These historic, natural and cultural assets form part of the strategic and local green-blue infrastructure network, linking urban and rural communities as well as habitats. By caring for our waterways and promoting their use we believe we can improve the wellbeing of our nation. The Canal & River Trust (the Trust) is a statutory consultee in the Development Management process, and as such we welcome the opportunity to input into planning policy related matters to ensure that our waterways are protected, safeguarded and enhanced within an appropriate policy framework.

Within the LB Barnet the Trust owns and manages the Brent Reservoir (Welsh Harp) waterspace and the Silk Stream (the stretch between the reservoir and the A5). As landowner, Under Section 281 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, the Trust are required to follow the specific process when permitting third parties to carry out work: the Trust notify Natural England of the operation, and take that into account before permitting or refusing, or giving conditions. The Trust must fulfil this procedure, even where the operation has been permitted by another authority (such as the Environment Agency or Local Planning Authority), as it is not possible for The Trust to rely on the notification or decision of another body. This process is not always followed, in part due to lack of awareness or clarity about the Trust's role and responsibilities. The Trust are supportive of the activities and involvement of other groups on the reservoir, and the Welsh Harp Strategy Group was formed in 2019 to work together to create a Joint Vision for the future of the site as a place for wildlife and people. The group is made up of representatives from the Canal & River Trust, Greater London Authority, London boroughs of Brent and Barnet, London Wildlife Trust and Thames21. The Trust, Barnet and Brent Council meet regularly to coordinate funding opportunities and demonstrate good partnership working.

Based on the documents and information available the Trust has the following response to the Main Modifications consultation.

The waterspace of the Brent Reservoir/Welsh Harp, is owned and managed by the Canal & River Trust, while the land and paths around the waterspace of the reservoir is owned and managed by Barnet and Brent Councils. We would therefore suggest this could be clarified, and have included a line, indicated below:

"10.2122 Natural and Semi Natural Space

Canal & River Trust Planning Team

Canal & River Trust, National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port South Pier Road Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH65 4FW
T: 0151 355 5017 E: nationalwaterwaysmuseum@canalrivertrust.org.uk W: canalrivertrust.org.uk

10.212.1 The Borough contains one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – the Welsh Harp (Brent Reservoir) - into which the River Brent and Silk Stream flow. The Reservoir was created in 1835 as a water supply for the canal network and is jointly managed by Barnet and Brent Councils with the Canal and River Trust (the charity that owns and cares for the canal network in England & Wales) who own the waterspace. As the largest expanse of water in Barnet, it provides an important recreational resource as well as a valuable wildlife habitat.”

Reference is also made in this paragraph to the vision for the Welsh Harp. This was a document published by the Canal & River Trust in 2023 (after the submission of the Local Plan), so we would request this be updated, as indicated below. A link to the document would also be helpful to include in the Local Plan:

“Access to the Welsh Harp (Brent Reservoir) is being improved as part of the regeneration proposals for the West Hendon Estate. Any increased access to the Welsh Harp will be managed appropriately in partnership with The Welsh Harp Strategy Group’s Welsh Harp Joint Vision the community’s Vision for the Harp and in consultation with the Canal & River Trust and Natural England to ensure its integrity as a SSSI is maintained.”

The Welsh Harp Joint Vision can be accessed here:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/where-we-work/london-and-south-east/current-projects/brent-reservoir-whats-happening/the-welsh-harp-brent-reservoir-vision#>

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Claire McLean [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Canal & River Trust Planning Team

Canal & River Trust, National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port South Pier Road Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH65 4FW
T: 0151 355 5017 E: nationalwaterwaysmuseum@canalrivertrust.org.uk W: canalrivertrust.org.uk