1. Summary

To update the Cabinet on the latest situation regarding Barnes Pond following initial investigations into the cause of the leak in April 2001 and agree delegation to the Executive Member for Sustainability, Equalities and Diversity to accept a tender up to £130,000 for making the pond watertight and re-landscaping.

2. Recommendation

That authority be delegated to the Executive Member for Sustainability, Equalities and Diversity to accept a tender for making Barnes Pond watertight (within a budget of £130,000).

3. Details

3.1 Two previous reports have been made to Cabinet.

3.1.1 On 16th July the following recommendations were agreed.

- Officers and local Members work with the local community to agree a plan for the repair and improvement of the pond and sufficient funding to achieve it, for discussion at a public meeting in September.
- Subject to the outcome of local consultation and further detailed investigations, preference be given to re-using or disposing of the silt on site and developing a borehole to provide water for refilling.
- The Council be recommended to provide matched funding for the project, up to a maximum of £60,000, when the capital programme is reviewed in September.

3.1.2 On 10th September the following recommendations were agreed.

- Phase 1 of the project (to remove some silt and facilitate investigations) be started immediately
• £30,000 be temporarily allocated to fund phase 1
• Options of removing 100% of the silt be pursued.

3.2 Since the report to the Cabinet from the Executive Member for Sustainability, Equalities and Diversity on 10 September 2001 an initial on site investigation has taken place into the cause of the leak.

3.2 Phase 1 a) of the project began in mid September. This involved dredging the silt to the sides of the pond in order to identify the cause of the leak. After a week of investigations no obvious cause could be found.

3.3 The pond base does not appear to be lined, and, being of sand with flints, will not hold water. A broken drain in the vicinity of the pond or a massive local abstraction remain the most likely cause of the water loss, even though investigations have been unable to prove either of these to be a definite cause. The Council was advised by two independent hydrologists that there would be little benefit in undertaking further investigations.

3.4 The present water table fluctuates considerably from well below the bed of the pond to the current level (Monday, 3 December 2001) when it is around half full). It is likely that at one time the pond had a clay liner but this has disintegrated over the years and become mixed with the silt. It was probably this silt which acted as a partial liner for the pond, although it was not watertight. This would account for the regular requirement to top up the pond as there would have been a slow seepage of water into the gravel below. In order to make the pond watertight once again it may need to be relined and the silt either removed or encapsulated.

3.5 In the interim further written advice has been received from the Environment Agency that now suggests that the silt is classified as inert waste soil and can be used on local landfill sites as daily cover. Therefore disposal need not be so onerous as previously recommended which should considerably reduce the costs of disposal.

3.6 The Council invited five specialist companies to recommend a detailed plan with prices to make the pond watertight, improve water quality and create an improved landform that increases opportunities for wildlife.

3.7 Detailed evaluation of the tenders is still progressing, however on the basis of the submissions a process of negotiation with tenderers will need to be undertaken to bring the scheme within a budget of £150,000. The final specification will need to be agreed by the Barnes Pond Partnership, in consultation with specialist advisors. In order to avoid delay once these processes are complete, it is proposed that authority be delegated to the Executive Member for Sustainability, Equalities and Diversity to agree the scheme details, method and cost within the budget available.

4. Consultation

4.1 The Barnes Pond Partnership has developed a landscaping scheme in conjunction with WWT, incorporating the analysis of the questionnaires received by the Barnes Community Association (BCA).
4.2 The proposed design will be presented at a public display from Saturday 15 December onwards at Barnes Green Day Centre. Final comments about landscaping and planting detail will still be able to be considered after this time.

5. **Financial Implications**

5.1 Expenditure to date (03 December 2001) on this project is £21,408

5.2 Phase 2 (relining) and Phase 3 – (Relandscaping) details are still being decided in detail and will be designed within a budget allocation of £130,000 and phased in order that the Council is in receipt of sufficient funds before committing expenditure.

5.3 This will be funded as follows:

- Council: £60,000
- Local fundraising: £92,000

Total at present: £152,000

In addition a Lottery application for £55,000 has been made for future developments for the landscaping in and around the pond.

6. **Policy and Equality Implications**

6.1 Restoration of Barnes Pond will restore a key wildlife habitat and local community focal point in the centre of Barnes Village. This will assist the Council in its key aims of sustainable management and in working with communities which contribute to Environment and Community Leadership.

7. **Background Papers**

Cabinet reports July and September 2001.

8. **Contacts**

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