



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	2008 Somme Pilgrimage
Date:	22nd February, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Mr. L. Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services
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Relevant Background Information

Correspondence has been received from the Somme Association enquiring if the Council would wish to be represented on the 2008 Pilgrimage to the Somme, France from 28th June until 2nd July, 2008. The Pilgrimage, to mark the 92nd Anniversary of the battle, will follow the route taken by the 36th (Ulster) and 16th (Irish) Divisions during their service in the First World War. Services of Commemoration will be held in both Thiepval and Guillemont.

Key Issues

In 2007, on the 91st Anniversary of the battle, the Committee authorised the attendance on the Somme tour of a representative of each of the Party Groupings on the Council. Members who attended found the event informative and worthwhile in that several of the ceremonial occasions were attended by many other dignitaries and officials, which afforded an opportunity for contacts to be made and relations to be developed on a range of topics and for the profile and image of Belfast to be promoted.

It should be noted that the Somme Pilgrimage tour coincides with the Council's own Somme Remembrance Ceremony as well as the monthly meeting of the Council on 1st July and accordingly Members who attend the Pilgrimage would be unable to be in attendance at those events.

Resource Implications

Financial

The cost per person of attendance is approximately £580 plus the appropriate subsistence allowance, provision for which has been made within the Revenue Budget.

Human Resources

There are no Human Resource implications associated with this report.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to approve the attendance on the tour of a representative of each of the Party Groupings on the Council and the Chief Executive (or his nominee) and authorise the payment of the appropriate travel and subsistence allowances in connection therewith.