



Report to: Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Subject: *Book of Honour* for Belfast

Date: Friday 23 May 2008

Reporting Officer: Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager

Relevant Background Information

Some years ago, Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for the *Book of Honour*, proposed that each District Council in Northern Ireland should publish a volume recording all those from their own Council area who had died in the Great War of 1914-18.

In August 2004 the Policy and Resources Committee considered a report outlining this suggestion. The Committee supported the proposal in principle but queried whether additional external funding could be secured for such a project.

In 2005, Sir Kenneth informed us that his Ad Hoc Committee had been successful in obtaining a grant of £20,000 from the Ulster Garden Village Trust and had engaged Mr Derek Smyth, a retired history teacher, to undertake the necessary research and prepare a *Book of Honour* for Belfast, using the City Council district as a pilot area. Mr Smyth made a presentation to the former Commemorations Working Group in February 2006, referring to the books already produced by Donegal and Newry & Mourne and outlining the various phases of his research. The Council included an article on the project in the winter 2006 edition of our *City Matters* magazine, to seek the public's assistance in the compilation of the list of people from Belfast who had given their lives during the Great War.

Key issues

The Belfast *Book of Honour* is now almost complete and is expected to be published around November 2008, the 90th anniversary of the ending of the First World War. The Ad Hoc Committee have had discussions with the editors and managers of the three main local daily newspapers who are keen to be involved with this project. It is likely that the format of the Book will be similar to that produced by Newry & Mourne Council with probable publication costs of around £20,000.

The Ad Hoc Committee has now approached us with a proposal that the publication costs could be shared equally by the City Council, the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and News Letter, with each contributing £5,000. The Ad Hoc Committee is planning to establish itself formally as a Company Limited by Guarantee and to pursue charitable status.

This is an excellent example of a cross-community historical initiative which illustrates our shared history and is funded by a combination of public and private finance. This proposal is in keeping

with the aims of our Good Relations strategy and the Ad Hoc Committee members are keen to stress the inter-denominational nature of their Committee and approach. The partnership with the local newspapers will ensure wide media coverage of the launch of the Book.

Resources required

Total costs of publication £20,000. Total Council contribution to be £5,000 and additional costs to be met by the 3 local daily newspapers.

The Good Relations Unit has made provision for this expenditure in its annual revenue budget.

Recommendation

The Good Relations Steering Panel considered this at its meeting on 9 May and recommends:

- that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the funding of the cost of the publication of a Book of Honour for Belfast, in partnership with the 3 main local newspapers - the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and News Letter - with a sum of up to £5,000, as outlined above.
- that the Council provide small scale hospitality at the launch of the *Book of Honour*.

Officer to contact for further information:

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