

Good Relations Unit
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
BELFAST
BT1 5GS

Monday 24 September 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

Consultation on Operation Banner

I am writing to advise you of a consultation exercise being undertaken by the City Council in relation to a possible memorial to the servicemen and women who served during Operation Banner.

In September 2007, the Council passed the following resolution:

"This Council acknowledges the tremendous support and sacrifice made by Her Majesty's Forces during thirty-five years of conflict in Northern Ireland. Operation Banner was the longest running campaign in military history, a campaign which saw the loss of many lives. Peace in Northern Ireland came at a heavy price but without the selfless dedication and commitment of the British Army, Ulster Defence Regiment, Royal Irish Regiment and the Royal Ulster Constabulary/Police Service of Northern Ireland this great City and, indeed, the entire Province would have found itself in a state of civil war. The Council welcomes the ending of Operation Banner but must be ever mindful of the ultimate sacrifice many had to pay for peace. The Council agrees to construct a fitting memorial to the Servicemen and women who helped to maintain peace and law and order during the duration of Operation Banner."

Although this topic has been discussed several times, the Council has not yet made any decision on what form this memorial should take.

At a recent meeting, it was agreed that consultation should take place with all the victims' groups in Belfast and that such consultation should be as broad and as inclusive as possible. I have therefore contacted the Victims & Survivors Service and the relevant welfare agencies of the police and armed forces to compile a list of victims' groups in Belfast.

Accordingly, I would like to invite you to send up to two representatives to a meeting to be held in the Conor Room of the City Hall at 2.00 pm on Thursday 4 October to discuss this proposal. Please contact Kirsten Mullen, Good Relations Officer, mullenk@belfastcity.gov.uk at 90270465, to let her know who will be attending from your organisation.

You may be aware that there are already three stained glass windows in the City Hall dedicated to various arms of the forces – including the Ulster Defence Regiment, the British Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary/George Cross.

A number of possible options for a memorial have been identified, including, in approximate ascending order of cost:

| | Description | Approx. cost £ |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| | In the City Hall | |
| A | Modification of existing stained glass UDR window to include the "Conspicuous Gallantry" Cross awarded by HM The Queen in October 2006 for their work "during Operation Banner" | 1,000 |
| B | Interpretative brass plaque alongside this window | 800 |
| | In the Garden of Remembrance, Donegall Square West, beside the Cenotaph: | |
| C | Granite bench | 2,200 |
| D | External brass plaque | 5,000 |
| E | 2 semi-mature trees | 9,000 |
| F | 4 semi-mature trees | 17,900 |
| G | 6 semi-mature trees | 26,000 |
| H | 8 semi-mature trees | 32,000 |
| I | An external bronze memorial on a Portland stone plinth | 55,000 |

It is of course also possible to select a number of these options or none as your preference.

The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee is keen that this consultation process should be completed by mid-October so I would encourage you to attend the meeting if possible so that the views of the victims' sector on the options identified to date may be established.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, we are still interested in your opinions.

I would advise you to contact Kirsten Mullen, Good Relations Officer, by letter to the address above; by e-mail to mullenk@belfastcity.gov.uk ; or by telephone to 90270465; to make your views known to us as soon as possible and certainly by Monday 8 October 2012, so that a report may be prepared to be considered by our principal Committee in October.

Yours faithfully

Hazel Francey
Good Relations Manager