



Subject:	Invite to participate in a visit to Srebrenica
Date:	21st June 2019
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Nicola Lane, Good Relations Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of correspondence from the Chair of the Remembering Srebrenica UK formally inviting the Good Relations Manager to participate in a 4 day visit to Srebrenica along with other civil service and senior political representatives in September/October 2019. This follows on from visits by delegations from all parts of the UK and Ireland including at very senior level within other devolved regions.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the invite from the Chair of the Srebrenica Committee UK for the participation of the Good Relations Manager in a visit to Srebrenica in September/October 2019.

3.0	Main report
	<p data-bbox="272 241 432 275"><u>Background</u></p> <p data-bbox="164 338 1436 465">3.1 The Srebrenica massacre, also known as the Srebrenica genocide, was the July 1995 massacre of more than 8,000 <u>Bosniaks</u>, mainly men and boys and mostly Muslim, in and around the town of Srebrenica during the Bosnian War.</p> <p data-bbox="164 499 1465 703">3.2 In 2005, Kofi Annan, then Secretary-General of the United Nations described the massacre as the worst crime on European soil since the Second World War. Both the International Tribunal to the former state of Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice have ruled the acts committed in July 1995 constituted genocide.</p> <p data-bbox="272 759 943 792"><u>Remembering Srebrenica and Council involvement</u></p> <p data-bbox="164 848 1469 1030">3.3 Remembering Srebrenica is a charitable initiative. It recognises that we have achieved a lot in terms of building a cohesive society here in the UK, but discrimination, promotion of hatred, extremism, and exclusion persist, and we must play our part, no matter how large or small, to create a better and safer society for all.</p> <p data-bbox="164 1086 1436 1469">3.4 It organises UK memorial events to honour survivors and keep alive the stories of their loved ones who died. They work with individuals and organisations to help strengthen society by learning the lessons of history to help tackle hatred, racism and intolerance wherever it occurs. They do this through commemoration, education and by taking individuals from communities across the UK to Srebrenica to speak to survivors and families whose loved ones were killed. Following the visit, participants are asked to apply the lessons learned from the experience and apply them in their own community and context to combat prejudice.</p> <p data-bbox="164 1543 1469 1671">3.5 Council have previously supported the Remembering Srebrenica event through provision of the City Hall as a venue which takes place in July and previous Lord Mayors have been invited to attend and deliver a speech.</p> <p data-bbox="164 1744 1406 1980">3.6 In commemorating this genocide in Europe in 1995, Remembering Srebrenica aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="371 1794 1374 1872">• Raise awareness of the genocide and consequences for victims and their families; <li data-bbox="371 1895 1134 1928">• Highlight the impact of ethnic and religious intolerance; <li data-bbox="371 1951 1007 1984">• Confront the consequences of prejudice; and </p>

- Encourage our community champions who have participated in similar visits to use their learning in their own communities and regions.

Request

3.7 Since 2013, Remembering Srebrenica has taken over 1,200 people to Srebrenica to learn about the consequences of hatred. Upon their return, delegates pledge to take action to raise awareness of the genocide and stand up to hatred and intolerance in their communities. In just six years, Remembering Srebrenica has brought people from different backgrounds together through organising 6,200 memorial activities across the UK and Ireland and educating 90,000 young people about Srebrenica and the dangers of hatred if left unchecked.

3.8 On this visit by a Northern Ireland delegation, there will be senior representatives from The Executive Office, the Department of Finance, two senior politicians and two special advisors. The chair of Remembering Srebrenica in Northern Ireland, will also participate.

3.9 During the visit, the conflict in the Balkans 1992-1995 will be explored including the siege of Sarajevo, the Dayton Agreement in 1995 and the delivery of power-sharing after that time; and of course, visit Srebrenica, to explore the build-up to the genocide in July 1995, what happened at Srebrenica and its aftermath; and indeed explore the diversity of Bosnia-Herzegovina prior to and since the conflict in the 1990s.

Relevance to Council

3.10 The outline of the visit has resonance for the work of Council given the challenging issues we are grappling with including confronting prejudice, division, how we embrace diversity and how we remember in a way that is ethical.

3.11 The Good Relations Unit is responsible for devising and implementing the Decade of Centenaries Programme remembering events from 100 years ago and also responsible for creating a narrative along with Party Group Leaders around how the Council could look at forthcoming 50th anniversaries in our own conflict. In addition, the Council has devised a set of shared principles which has helped the Council to navigate its way through difficult and contentious issues during this time. Themes of commemoration and ethical remembering are also contained within the draft Good Relations Strategy as well as within the PEACE IV Programme and Good Relations Action Plan.

3.12	Therefore, it would seem fitting that we look to another recent conflict to study how they deal with the issue of remembrance and memorialisation and bring learning back as well as share our experience.
3.13	As Council has and probably will be the organisation which will take the lead in commemoration at a Belfast level, it would also be useful to liaise with the civil service around how they envisage dealing with this issue and look at potential areas of cooperation.
3.14	In addition, the TEO have asked us to partner with them again to deliver and host International Holocaust Remembrance Day again in January 2020 as next year is the 75 th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. It is worth noting that the IHR Day also remembers genocides in Darfur, Rwanda and Srebrenica.
3.15	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All costs for the trip will be covered by the organisation with no cost to Council. Resource would be Officer time and subsistence.</p>
3.16	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The learning from the above visit would be incorporated into the Council's approach as to how we remember and would serve to have a positive impact on good relations and equality. There are no implications regarding rural need.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None