

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Report by Strategic Lead - Regulatory**

**Special Meeting of the Cultural Committee: 5 October 2020**

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**Subject: Town Twinning and 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Clydebank Blitz - Update**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** To provide the Committee with an update on progress being made in relation to the visit to Letterkenny and preparations for 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- (a) note that the planned visit to meet with the Mayor of Letterkenny in March 2020 was postponed and would be rearranged as soon as it was deemed safe to do so;
- (b) note the progress made in respect of discussions with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in connection with the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz;
- (c) note that the contract to produce commemorative medals for those services involved in helping the people of Clydebank during and after the Blitz had been awarded to Morrison-Ignatieff, Silversmiths, Glasgow following the quotation process;
- (d) agree that the medals be funded from the part of unallocated balance of funds from the Cultural budget for 2019/20 which had now been earmarked for that purpose;
- (e) agree that a total of seven medals be commissioned for presentation to the undernoted organisations:

Polish Navy (Polish Consul General);  
Police Scotland;  
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service;  
Scottish Ambulance Service;  
Royal College of Nurses (Scotland);  
Royal College of Physicians (Scotland);  
Royal Voluntary Service (on behalf of WRVS);

- (f) agree that a small commemorative plaque which incorporates the design of the medals be commissioned at a cost of £1500 for display in the Town Hall, and is funded from the unallocated balance of funds from the Cultural budget for 2019/20;

- (g) agree that an exception is made to the normal procurement procedure to allow the contract to be awarded to Morrison-Ignatieff without the need for a further tendering exercise due to the proprietary nature of the artistic design;
- (h) agree that the Cultural budget for 2020/21 of £25,000 is used to fund the Council's costs in relation to the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz;
- (i) agree with the recommendation of the Working Group on the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz that planning should proceed on the basis of the full event will take place in March 2021, with the proviso that it may need to be cancelled at short notice and replaced with a scaled down event involving only the most senior officials and guests; and
- (j) agree, in principle, with the recommendation of the Blitz Working Group that, subject to approval by the Clydebank Property Company, a large commemorative plaque be located in Solidarity Plaza to commemorate the 80th Anniversary and instruct the Manager of Democratic Services to obtain estimated costs for the works and report back to a future meeting of the Committee.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1** At its meeting on 23 September 2019, the Cultural Committee noted that a communication had been received from the Mayor of Letterkenny inviting Members of the Committee to meet with him in Letterkenny to discuss the development of the Friendship Agreement. On 27 January 2020, the Committee agreed that the visit should take place on 26/27 March 2020, subject to Provost Hendrie's availability.
- 3.2** The Manager of Democratic and Registration Services has since been in communication with Donegal County Council and at the request of the Mayor of Letterkenny, in consultation with Provost Hendrie and Bailie Agnew, it was agreed that the proposed trip to Letterkenny be postponed until the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

### **4. Main Issues**

- 4.1** The Manager of Democratic and Registration Services has maintained contact with officials from Donegal County Council and will reschedule a visit to Letterkenny as soon as it is deemed safe to do so by both parties.
- 4.2** At the meeting of the Working Group on the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz on 21 February 2020, a draft programme of events proposed by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) was discussed. It was agreed that the Convener and the Manager of Democratic and Registration Services should meet again with the Chief Executive of the RSNO to discuss the programme in more detail. The meeting took place on Thursday 27 February 2020 and it was agreed that site visits would take place in a number of Clydebank churches to enable planning to proceed on the final programme of events and to enable the RSNO to prepare an estimate of their costs of supporting the blitz events. This work was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now that some of the lockdown restrictions have been relaxed,

the RSNO made contact to re-arrange the site visits to three local churches, namely: Our Holy Redeemer's RC Church, Kilbowie St. Andrew's Parish Church and St. Eunan's RC Church. The site visits took place on 23 July 2020 and all three churches were considered to be suitable to host part of the RSNO chorus. The RSNO will now finalise their plans for the church performances and report back with its proposal in due course.

**4.3** The Blitz Working Group in February also discussed the commissioning of bespoke medals for those services and volunteers who came to the aid of the people of Clydebank during and after the blitz and agreed to recommend that the cost be met from the unallocated balance of the Cultural Budget for 2019/20.

**4.4** During the lockdown period, the Manager of Democratic and Registration Services completed the procurement exercise for the commissioning of medals and invited three companies to submit bids for the work. Two bids were received and the contract to produce six silver medals was awarded to Morrison-Ignatieff, Glasgow, who submitted the lowest estimate of cost at £7250 and scored highest in terms of the specified quality criteria. However, it now proposed that seven medals be commissioned for presentation to the undernoted organisations:

Polish Navy (Polish Consul General);  
Police Scotland;  
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service;  
Scottish Ambulance Service;  
Royal College of Nurses;  
Royal College of Physicians;  
Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS);

**4.6** The revised cost for the seven medals is now £8500. The Committee is asked to note that the cost per medal has also increased slightly due to the increase in price of silver since the original estimate was submitted but the silversmith has given a commitment to try to keep the price as close as possible to the original price per medal.

**4.7** It has also been suggested that a small commemorative plaque which incorporates the design of the medal be commissioned at a cost of £1500. for display in the Town Hall. It is proposed that part of a medal (front face) will be incorporated into the design of the plaque and therefore it makes sense to commission the same silversmith to make the plaque using the same design to make the original medals. This being the case the Committee is asked to note that it is necessary to make an exception to the normal procurement procedures in this instance.

**4.8** At the meeting of the Blitz Working Group on 21 August 2020, it was agreed to recommend to the Committee that a large commemorative granite plaque be located in Solidarity Plaza to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz. The plaque would be unveiled by Provost Hendrie on Saturday 13 March 2021 as a part of the commemorations. It was noted that Solidarity Plaza was managed by the Clydebank Property Company and therefore if the Committee agrees to commission the plaque then consent would be sought from the company's Board. The Working Group also noted that the Convener would explore the possibility of involving some well known Scottish actors to participate in the event and would report back to a future meeting.

**4.9** At the time of writing of this report Scotland is in phase 3 of the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions but recently further restrictions have been introduced across the country due to the increased infection rates. The Blitz Working Group, at its meeting on 21 August 2020, agreed that planning should proceed on the basis that Scotland will be in phase four of the recovery period and therefore the full event will take place in March 2021, with the proviso that it may need to be cancelled at short notice. It was noted that as an alternative, depending on the government advice at the time, it may be possible to hold a small scaled down set of ceremonies involving only the most senior officials and guests to mark the occasion but this could be very difficult to plan for given the high level of uncertainty over the availability of an effective vaccine.

## **5. People Implications**

**5.1** There are no staff implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

**6.1** In 2019/20, the Committee was advised that the Council had made a budget of £25,000 available for expenditure on culture. The Cultural Committee agreed that £10,000 be allocated for the purchase of art leaving a balance of £15,000. In addition, some costs were incurred in relation to the planned trip to the Letterkenny which was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic leaving an unallocated total of £13,523 available. This unused balance was earmarked to pay for the remaining costs of the Letterkenny trip (the sum of approximately £500 for car hire and gifts) and the remainder of costs associated with the Blitz commemorations. The Committee is asked that £10,000 be allocated to meet the costs of seven commemorative medals and a commemorative silver plaque. This will leave the sum of £3,023 available from the 2019/20 unallocated funds.

- 6.2** The Blitz Working Group has also recommended the commissioning of a large commemorative granite plaque in Solidarity Square. As there are no costs available yet, the Committee is asked to approve this proposal in principle to allow the Manager of Democratic and Registration Services to obtain estimates for the work and report back to a future meeting of the Committee. The Working Group also noted that Solidarity Plaza is managed by the Clydebank Property Committee and therefore permission to erect the memorial would need to be sought from the company's Board.
- 6.3** The costs associated with the proposed RSNO concerts in local churches and the Clydebank Town Hall have still to be finalised but in the meantime, the Committee is asked to agree that the entire Cultural budget for 2020/21 be used to fund the Council's costs in relation to the 80th Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** The 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz is a significant event which the Council will be expected to lead and it is therefore important that sufficient funding is available to support the event and meet all costs incurred by the Council. However, there is a risk that a second outbreak of the coronavirus in 2021 could impact on the planned commemorations.
- 7.2** The Blitz Working Group has recommended that planning proceeds for the full set of events and if necessary the events are scaled down at short notice depending on the Scottish Government guidance at that time. If this happens then it is likely that the Council will need to meet some of the costs incurred by third parties which will have been booked well in advance of the event. If the decision to scale down the event is taken too late in the day to properly make arrangements for the contingency plan to take effect then the Council could also risk reputational damage given the high profile of some of the invited guests.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 8.1** There are no impacts on any equality groups arising from the recommendations of this report. However, an EIA screening will be carried out prior to the final RSNO proposals being presented to the Committee or Blitz Working Group.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1** Officers from Legal, Procurement and Finance Services have been consulted on the contents of this report.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

- 10.1** The development of town twinning activity could have some real educational and cultural benefits for those citizens who participate in such events and the promotion of West Dunbartonshire through these twinning or friendship links could potentially generate some economic benefit to the area through increased tourism. The involvement of local churches and communities is an important element of the Clydebank Blitz commemorations which fits well with the Council's strategy on community involvement and engagement.

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**Date:** 30 September 2020

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**Appendices:** None.

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** None.